

Northwest Association of
Accredited Schools



High School Annual Report

2007-08

EVIDENCE BASED SCHOOL EVALUATION

Annual Report and Standards for the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools

Setting World Standards for Accreditation



2007-08

www.northwestaccreditation.org

The mission of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools is to advance excellence in education through the process of accreditation.



PREFACE

This document incorporates the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools' *Standards* for elementary, middle level, high school, K-12, special purpose, distance education, international, travel study, supplemental education, and postsecondary nondegree granting schools with the required *Annual Report*.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools was formed as a voluntary organization on April 5, 1917 with a membership of 25 secondary schools and eight higher institutions in four northwestern states. By December 2006, this membership increased to 1833. Presently, the organization functions in seven states: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington along with other geographical areas of the United States and the world. It developed as one of six regional associations of secondary and higher schools organized between 1885 and 1962. In December 1974, the title of the Association was changed to: Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The Secondary Commission is now known as the Commission on Schools. In December 2001, the association's name was changed to the Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities. On February 1, 2004 the association's name was changed to its current name, the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.

PURPOSES

The purposes of the Northwest Association, as stated in the Articles of Incorporation are to:

1. Advance the cause of education in the schools of the Northwest and elsewhere as approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. Develop educational policies and activities that will extend and improve educational opportunities and services.
3. Develop criteria of evaluation that will continually stimulate, evaluate, and accredit vital educational efforts.
4. Promote cooperative relationships among categories of schools in order to attain these ends.

The Association implements these purposes through constructive and continual effort. Member schools are accredited on the basis of standards developed by the Association. Each member school is required to participate in self- and team-evaluations during each six-year period using a means of self-evaluation approved by the State Accreditation Committee. All member schools are required to accept credits from schools accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges, subject to state laws and Association policies. As a service to our membership, the Association publishes newsletters, research reports, web pages, and pamphlets that are widely distributed.

ORGANIZATION

The officers of the Association include the President, First Vice President, and Second Vice President, each of whom is a member of and entitled to vote on the Board of Trustees.

Commission on Schools

The Commission on Schools consists of the combined State Accreditation Committees from all the member states, one at-large representative for non-public schools, one at-large representative for higher education, and four at-large public representatives.

Each State Accreditation Committee consists of four (4) members elected for a term of three (3) years, with at least one (1) elected annually. One (1) of the four (4) members in each state may be a representative of the State Department of Education in that state.

The Commission on Schools is charged with the responsibility of affecting the purposes of the Association as they pertain to all categories of schools. It is the specific responsibility of the Association to recommend by electronic mail ballot to the member schools the necessary standards that shall apply to member schools.

The President of the Association presides at all meetings. The President is responsible for the Association's function and must report the proceedings of the Association. The President is empowered to appoint committees essential to complete the work of the Association.

INTRODUCTION

The eight *Standards for Accreditation* serve as the benchmarks by which the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools makes accreditation decisions.

Written and approved by the school membership, the *Standards for Accreditation* establish those aspects of schools that practitioners have identified as appropriate for ensuring an effective focus on teaching and learning, improving student performance, and the support for teaching and learning.

In order to maintain accredited status, schools must demonstrate that they meet the *Standards for Accreditation* and continually work to improve student performance. They do this by participating in a three-phase accreditation cycle that involves:

1. Conducting a nearly 12-month self-study in which the school assesses the degree to which its work is characterized by the practices articulated in the *Standards for Accreditation*.
2. Having an on-site visitation by an external team of peer reviewers, known as the Response Team or Visitation Team that determines the extent to which the school meets the *Standards for Accreditation* and writes an evaluation report describing strengths and recommendations for improvement in terms of the *Standards for Accreditation*.
3. Developing an action or school improvement program in which the school demonstrates through regular reporting to the State Accreditation Committee that it is addressing identified needs in a timely fashion.

Students, parents, community members, the school board, and colleges can depend on the *Standards for Accreditation* and the accreditation process to ensure that schools in the Northwest Association meet high but reasonable expectations and are constantly striving to improve student achievement as well as the systems, processes, practices, and conditions that support student learning in their schools.

The Northwest Association of Accredited Schools accredits elementary schools, middle level schools, high schools, international schools, K-12 schools, special purpose schools (SPS), travel study schools (TSS), supplementary education schools (SES), and distance education schools (DES). Accreditation procedures are virtually identical, regardless of type or classification, and *Standards for Accreditation* are consistent. The definitions for accreditation should be looked upon as guidelines with the final determination of classification resting with the State Accreditation Committee.

Although it is a purpose of the Association to develop certain basic standards for the approval of schools, it is recognized by the Association that desirable variations will occur in the purposes and programs of institutions. Standards and procedures are sufficiently flexible to provide for these variations within a common framework of conditions for quality education.

It is the policy of the Association to recognize that schools under consideration of being “Dropped” due to departures from specific standards must prove excellence. It is the responsibility of the member school and of the State Accreditation Committee to submit such information **annually**, as the Association may require, supporting the school’s claim of general excellence. The Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, through research and study, shall continue to seek to improve its standards, to make them stimulating, and make them conducive to the educational advancement of its member schools.

STANDARDS

The *Standards for Accreditation* for member schools include minimum requirements that have been substantiated by research, direct observation, or the judgment of experienced educators as basic requirements for a satisfactory program of education. Many of the standards are derived from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Public Secondary Schools in an effort to provide consistency among accreditation regions.

The Association will recognize the need for flexibility in applying the standards in order to provide for changes in curriculum content, improved methods of instruction, and experimental programs. The State Accreditation Committee (SAC) shall first approve any deviation by schools from the standards for the purpose of pilot programs, educational research, or experimental projects. The summary of approved projects **shall** be submitted as a part of the annual report and **shall** include, but not be limited to:

1. Aims and objectives of the project and an explanation of how it fits into the complete school program.
2. An explanation of how the project results in deviation from specific standards.
3. Anticipated duration of the project.
4. Methods to be used in evaluating results of the project and any conclusions reached.

When making the transition to new provisions of the standards, member schools will be allowed a reasonable period of time, as approved by the State Accreditation Committee (SAC), to achieve complete compliance, as long as there is evidence that yearly

progress is being made. Schools making application for membership must substantially comply with the current standards. The applicant must be approved, accredited, licensed, or recognized by the legally constituted educational agency in its state or by a government agency.

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

New Members

1. Schools seeking membership in the Association **shall**:
 - a. Submit an official application form and fee containing the resolution by the governing body (Board of Trustees, Board of Education, or Board of Directors) approving the application and accepting the regulations, standards, and principles of the Association to the SAC by October 15. Application forms may be obtained from the SAC or the Executive Director of the Commission on Schools. The SAC will review and make recommendations to the Commission on Schools.
 - b. Submit this completed *Annual Report to the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools* to the SAC before October 15.
 - c. Submit to the SAC certification that: (1) the school has completed within the preceding three years a self-evaluation using evaluation instruments approved by the SAC, and (2) a Response Team has reviewed the appraisal made in the self-evaluation. Applicants must substantially meet the standards established by the Association.
 - d. Provide evidence of accreditation, licensing, or recognition by the legally constituted educational agency in its state or by a government agency.
 - e. Make payment for the annual dues to the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. The office of the Executive Director will mail dues statements to all newly admitted members after each annual business meeting. The dues year runs from September 1 to August 31. New members are accepted at the annual business meeting in December and their first year of membership extends through August 31.

Provisional Membership may be granted to applicant schools that would otherwise be approved for membership, with the understanding that the self-evaluation be completed within three years of the date of application. Provisional members are not entitled to vote on the mail ballot. All provisional members must undergo a preliminary visit by a member of the State Accreditation Committee and one other person prior to being accepted as a provisional member.

2. Other Policies Pertaining to Admission:
 - a. A newly organized school must be in operation in its own building before applying for membership.
 - b. When two or more schools combine to form a new school, the resulting school shall be required to apply for membership as a new school.
 - c. When a member school divides and forms a new school, the new school is required to apply for membership as a new member.
 - d. When a member school absorbs other schools, member or non-member, the newly formed school continues its membership, provided it can meet the standards of the Association, and provided it conducts an approved self-evaluation within three years.
 - e. Schools not categorized above shall be considered on an individual basis by the SAC.
 - f. The SAC **shall** request an assessment of a new school's eligibility for provisional membership by conducting a preliminary visit prior to accepting the school as a provisional member.

Current Members

The principal or director of each member school submits this *Annual Report to the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools* to the SAC Chair. This report is due by October 15 of each year. The SAC reviews and evaluates the report and then recommends a classification to the Association. The Association then establishes the classification for each member school.

Classification Ratings

Based on evaluations made by the SACs, schools are "Approved," "Advised," "Warned," or "Dropped" from the list of accredited schools. The SAC considers the number of standards not substantially met in assigning ratings. A member school is considered "Withdrawn" when it voluntarily chooses to discontinue its membership.

A school is classified as "Approved" when it mostly meets the standards of the Association. A school may be "Approved with Comment" when it has identified and is addressing standards that are "not presently met."

A school is classified as "Advised" when it fails to identify or is in the process of addressing standards that are "not presently met." Schools will also be placed on the "Advised" list when no observable effort has been made, by the second year, to identify or address standards that have been previously identified as "not presently met." An "Approved with Comment" classification need not precede an "Advised" classification.

A school is classified as “Warned” when a significant number of the standards are “not presently met.” A “Warned” classification is usually given after a school has been “Advised” and the failure to meet the standard persists. A school may be moved from “Approved” to “Warned” when the failure to meet the standard is such that it should not be allowed to persist beyond the current year. A school shall be “Dropped” from membership after two consecutive “Warned” assignments, with the understanding that the SAC has the authority to liberalize this rule. If such an exception is made, it should be followed with an explanation by the SAC. Schools receiving a “Dropped” status have the right to appeal as outlined in the *Bylaws of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools*.

Self-Study and Evaluation

1. For full accreditation, a self-evaluation (self-study) shall be carried out by faculty, students, and community representatives according to the procedures of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.
2. An assessment of the educational program of a school seeking provisional accreditation shall be made by an Initial Visit Team with two members serving as the official representatives of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.
3. The Initial Visit Team shall appraise the quality and comprehensiveness of the school’s compliance with the *Standards*, make professional recommendations for further study and implementation, and assess the extent to which standards are being met.
4. Following the initial visit for provisional accreditation, a full six-year evaluation in which schools must address recommendations, establish goals, and implement processes to reach goals must occur. A statement of plans must be completed within one year of the full evaluation. The SAC may require an interim (3-5 years) conference or report which documents/evaluates progress made toward meeting the accreditation recommendations of the six-year evaluation.
5. During the fifth and sixth years following full and subsequent self-studies, staff of accredited schools and systems shall engage in new self-studies as an integral part of the ongoing process of school improvement.
6. The self-studies shall be initiated during the fifth year and completed during the sixth year and shall be conducted according to procedures of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

1. MISSION, BELIEFS, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING
2. CURRICULUM
3. INSTRUCTION
4. ASSESSMENT

SUPPORT STANDARDS

5. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION
 6. SCHOOL SERVICES
 - Student Support Services
 - Guidance Services
 - Health Services
 - Library Information Services
 - Special Education Services
 - Family and Community Services
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TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Guiding Principle: The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

3. INSTRUCTION

3.1 Instructional strategies are consistent with the school's mission statement and expectations for student learning.

☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.2 Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to:

- a. personalize instruction;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- b. make connections across disciplines;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- c. engage students as active learners;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- d. engage students as self-directed learners;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- e. involve students in higher order thinking;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- f. provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- g. promote student self-assessment and self-reflection;
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- h. recognize diversity, multiculturalism, individual differences, and other prevalent unique characteristics of the student population.
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.3 Teachers use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.

☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.4 Teachers are proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.

☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.5 Analysis of instructional strategies is a significant part of the professional culture of the school.

☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.6 Technology is integrated into and supportive of teaching and learning.

☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**

3.7 Library information services are available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.

SUPPORT STANDARD

Guiding Principle: Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

6. SCHOOL SERVICES

Library Information Services

- 6.13 The library media program is directed by a certified library media specialist.
- a. Library staff in schools of **fewer than 250 students** need not be certified, but are under the direction of a qualified library media specialist.
 - b. Schools with an **enrollment between 250 and 500 students** have a full-time qualified library media specialist.
 - c. Schools with more than **500 students** have a full-time library media specialist and have additional library media personnel.
 - d. Personnel are under the direction of a qualified library media specialist.
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- 6.14 Students, faculty, and support staff have regular and frequent access to library/information services, facilities, and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**
- 6.15 The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various school and community information resources and technologies.
☐ **Substantially Met** ☐ **Partially Met** ☐ **Not Presently Met**